a State subject; therefore, it is for the respective State Government to bring suitable legislation for prevention of sale of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes including setting up of Industries. However, with a view to lay down broad guidelines and policy recommendations on agrarian relations and land reforms, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, has set up a National Council for Land Reforms under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of India. The other members of the council include Union Ministers of Rural Development, Agriculture, Environment and Forests, Panchayati Raj, Tribal Affairs, Social Justice and Empowerment, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, other distinguished members and Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development as Member Secretary.

As per available estimates, total cultivable land was 185.09 million ha. in 1980-81 which has reduced to 182.57 million ha. in 2005-06 in the country. During the same period, land under non-agricultural uses has increased from 19.66 million ha. to 24.94 million ha., resulting in marginal decline in the extent of cultivable land. This reduction in cultivable land is mainly due to diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries etc.

National Policy on Farmers 2007

809. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
PROF. ALKABALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a)whether Government is aware that the conditions of farmers in the country is deteriorating day by day and suicides by farmers are increasing;

(b)if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c)whether Government has since taken any steps to implement the National Policy on Farmers 2007 in letter and spirit to prevent suicides by farmers; and

(d)if so, the further reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Agriculture contributes nearly 18% of India's GDP with about 60% of the country's population dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The progress in agriculture has enabled the country to achieve food security. However, the agricultural growth during the Ninth Plan and first three years of the Tenth Plan was below the targeted growth of 4% per annum due to various reasons leading to rural distress in certain parts of the country. A Statement indicating number of suicides by farmers during the last few years, as reported by the State Governments is enclosed *(see* below). The State Governments have broadly reported crop failure, indebtedness, drought, social and economic insecurity as causes for committing suicide by farmers.

(c) and (d) Based on the Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers submitted by the National Commission on Farmers, the Government has approved the National Policy for Farmers, 2007. Various recommendations made by the Commission for rejuvenation of agriculture and allied sectors, as accepted by the Government, have been incorporated in the National Policy for Farmers. These include, *inter alia,* asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies for improving productivity in a sustainable manner; agricultural bio-security system; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material; issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers and integrated nutrient and pest management system, etc.

Government has launched two new Schemes namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM) to improve production and productivity of foodgrains and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna (RKVY) with an objective to incentivise the States so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sector and to provide flexibility and autonomy to States in the process of planning and executing agriculture and allied sector schemes.

To address the problem of suicide by farmers, Government of India has approved a Rehabilitation Package amounting to Rs. 16978.69 crore, for 31 districts spread over the States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. The Package consisting of short term and long term measures is being implemented since July, 2006. It aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through debt relief to farmers, improved supply of institutional credit, assured irrigation facilities, watershed management, better extension and farming support services and subsidiary income opportunities. Besides, a number of initiatives, Plan Schemes and programmes including the initiatives/programmes announced in the Budget 2008-09 have been taken/initiated to address the problems faced by the farmers and for development of agriculture sector.

Statement

Cases of Suicide by farmers as Received from State Governments

Sl. No.	Name of the State	Period	No. (Based on the figures reported by State Govts.)	
1	2	3	4	
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2004	1251	
		2005	632	
		2006	514	
		2007 (upto 30.6.2007)	142	
2.	Karnataka	2004-05	271	
		2005-06	163	
		2006-07	343	
		2007-08 (up to 31.12.2007)	235	
3.	Maharashtra		Total	Vidarbha
		2004	632	441
		2005	595	431
		2006	2355	1448
		2007	1985	1230
		2008 (up to Jan. 2008)	110	72
4.	Kerala	2001 to 2006	841	
		2007 (up to 31.10.2007)	64	